



Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

E-Newsletter

June 2012

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Canadian Council of Churches supports US war resisters in letter to Minister



Members of CJP, including Keith Helmuth (right), deliver letter to Ministers' office.

On International Conscientious Objectors Day (May 15th), The Canadian Council of Churches' Commission on Justice and Peace released a letter to the Jason Kenney, the Minister of Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism asking “the Government of Canada to either allow the US war resisters to stay in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds or to create a mechanism, perhaps a revision of Bill C-440 that would enable them to apply for status from within Canada.”

The Council's letter (English, French) comes out firmly in support of rights of conscience, specifically conscientious objection to military service and war: “As churches, rights of conscience and religion hold a particular significance for us as we seek to encourage people to live faithful lives. We are of the opinion that when they have followed their conscience in the decision they made to refuse to serve in war and to come to Canada then their circumstances warrant humanitarian and compassionate relief. Their beliefs are protected under domestic and international law, and facilitating their punishment by returning them to the United States, in our opinion, is regrettable.” 80% of Christians in Canada are represented through the Council, so this endorsement is significant. Read more: <http://bit.ly/KcOSUT>

CFSC makes submission to BC justice review

On February 8, 2012, Geoffrey Cowper was asked to conduct a formal review of British Columbia's justice system, as Chair of the Justice Reform Initiative. At the same time, the Ministry of Justice released a Green Paper, which summarizes some of the concerns identified by the provincial government. The goals of the independent review are to look at the facts underlying the concerns raised by the government and public with regard to criminal justice issues, and to recommend solutions that would make the system more efficient and effective. More information on the review can be found at: <http://bcjusticereform.ca/>.

Based on CFSC's experience with a wide range of justice related work in Canada (chaplaincy and remedial programs within prisons; re-integration into communities; work with victims, restorative justice and crime prevention in communities), it is making a formal submission to the independent review including a number of recommendations from the perspective of restorative justice and the rights of the child. Copies are available from qfj@quakerservice.ca or on CFSC's website: <http://quakerservice.ca/news-and-resources/public-statements/>.

Marking CO witness in the War of 1812 – June 10th event

Members of the traditional peace churches in the Niagara region will commemorate the experience of Canadian pioneers of peace and conscientious objection in the War of 1812 during the 200th anniversary year. Historical markers honouring the witness of the peace churches were developed and have been installed at various locations in Niagara (visit: <http://mcco.ca/historical-markers-peace>, and for a map, <http://bit.ly/IPpLbx>).

A full-day public event will be held on Sunday June 10th in the Niagara region, including touring all of the markers. Join Pelham Executive Meeting for Worship at 11 am at the site of the marker at the Port Colborne (on Lake Erie), or with the formal tour which starts at 2 pm. Email don [at] donalexander.ca for full details. CFSC is pleased to have provided a grant towards the costs of the two Quaker markers.

Gordon Hirabayashi awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom

On May 29th, Gordon Hirabayashi (Edmonton Meeting) was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by US President Barack Obama; the award was accepted by Susan Carnahan (Edmonton Meeting), his spouse. The Medal is the US's highest civilian award. It recognizes individuals who have made "an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors". Read more about Gordon's contribution in the White House press release: <http://1.usa.gov/ltwV7D>

Three Young Adult Friends attending Youth & Militarism Conference

Christel LeBlanc (Halifax Monthly Meeting), Sheehan Moore (New Brunswick MM, currently in Montreal attending McGill), and Matthew Webb (Coldstream MM) will attend the War Resister's International Conference "Countering the Militarisation of Youth" in Darmstadt, Germany (June 8-10). The conference provides a unique opportunity to develop an understanding of the reach and consequences of militarization and the possibilities of non-violence in resolving conflicts. Read about their experience at <http://notesoncountermilitarism.wordpress.com/>, follow Christel on Twitter (@TheForestFriend), and read postings on the Halifax Meeting's Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/HalifaxQuakers>.

British Friends exploring concerns about the tar sands

Staff from Quaker Peace and Social Witness's Sustainability and Peace Programme have been in touch with CFSC regarding Friends' witness on the tar sands, now mostly undertaken ecumenically through Kairos. Next year, the European Union will be voting on whether to effectively block tar sands fuel from EU markets, so there is cause for British Friends to engage with their MPs and MEPs on this concern. We shared the CFSC briefing papers on health and on leases as well as information about the work of Kairos (find briefing papers here: <http://bit.ly/M2EyGm>).

The CFSC E-Newsletter shares current concerns and information related to CFSC, its projects, and other news with Quaker Meetings in Canada, friends and donors to CFSC.

Share the E-Newsletter with friends and your Meeting or Worship Group's E-mail list!

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